

### *Identifying the Gaps between the Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS) for ELA and a school's current curriculum*

This process is designed to guide schools in identifying where gaps in instruction may occur as they begin to transition to the new Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS) for English Language Arts (ELA). Teachers and administrators will need to plan how to address gaps for students who will miss exposure to content. The process outlined in this document sets the stage for addressing gaps and for continued collaboration among colleagues to strengthen understanding of the KCAS.

This process compares the KCAS to the school's current, enacted curriculum. Schools may choose to work directly with the Kentucky Program of Studies and Core Content 4.1. This process may need to be adjusted to suit various dynamics of schools. Note that this process provides one way to identify instructional gaps. Some schools have designed other processes which they have found to be useful and reliable.

It is important to note that for the grade bands 9-10 and 11-12 the standards are **not** designed to be divided between two grade levels. Instead, the standards apply to both grade levels within the band. The level of complexity in text and task should be appropriate for each grade, with more complex texts and tasks at the higher grade within the band. The appendices to the standards are useful for learning more about the differences in complexity between these grades.

#### ***Recommendations for the Process***

Begin with a common understanding of terminology.

- ***A gap occurs*** when content previously taught at one grade level is now included in the KCAS at an earlier grade level. Thus, as students move to the next grade, they will miss exposure to that content. The gap may occur between one or more grade levels.
- ***Another kind of gap*** occurs for content that is new to our standards if students will miss the scaffolding of previous grade levels.
- ***A gap does not occur*** if the content is now present in an upper grade level. This simply means that students will be exposed to that content in a later grade.
- ***Increased rigor is not considered a gap*** since the content is not new. However, the new standards may call for more rigor requiring a change in instruction.

**Define rigor** before beginning this process. Although an increase in rigor is not considered a gap, this process identifies those areas within the new standards that call for a more rigorous curriculum. Before participating in this activity, the staff needs to have a good understanding of rigor. The *Characteristics of Highly Effective Teaching and Learning* provide a good foundation for understanding rigor. This resource can be found on the Kentucky Department of Education's website. One comparison that demonstrates a call for increased rigor in the new standards is for the concept of author's point of view or purpose. For example, an 8th grade Program of Studies standard (EL-8-IT-S-3) reads, *"Students will use text references to explain author's purpose, author's message or theme, and supporting evidence."* The KCAS standard for Reading Informational Text, Standard 6, at 8<sup>th</sup> grade reads, *"Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints."* The new standard moves students well beyond identifying and explaining author's purpose to analysis of opposing viewpoints. It would be worthwhile for teachers to look at how the change in rigor progresses through all the grade levels for this comparison.

### **Organization**

Organize so teachers begin by working individually or with a grade level partner, then in grade level teams. In addition, teachers should be able to share from across all grade levels. This process works best when there is representation from all grade levels in the room. It is further recommended that teachers have the opportunity to work with teachers from other schools in their district.

### **Time Saving Possibilities**

1. Set time limits for the different activities.
2. Complete the first steps individually and/or in Professional Learning Communities before the whole group is together. Teachers can compare their enacted curriculum with the KCAS individually or with grade level partners.
3. Complete different steps on different days.
4. Complete the process by strand (Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, Writing, Speaking & Listening, Language, Reading Foundations) instead of using all the ELA standards at once. Another option is to jigsaw the strands if you have enough participants.

### **Materials:**

KCAS 11x17 Grade level placemats (documents that display all ELA standards for one grade level on one page)

Highlighters (variety of colors)

Current curriculum document (you may ask teachers to bring this)

Access to the on-line bookmarked KCAS crosswalk found here:

[http://www.education.ky.gov/users/otl/CCDx/ELA\\_Bookmarked\\_Crosswalk\\_07152010\\_1233.pdf](http://www.education.ky.gov/users/otl/CCDx/ELA_Bookmarked_Crosswalk_07152010_1233.pdf)

Chart paper (tape or sticky chart paper)

Markers

Sticky notes

*Identified Gap* sheets for grade level groups

*Vocabulary List & Professional Development Topics* sheets for grade level groups

**Process:**

1. Provide each teacher the KCAS grade level placemat for the grade they teach. They should have access to placemats for a few grades before and the grades that follow for reference.
2. Individually (or with a grade level partner), teachers read carefully through the KCAS for their grade level.

**Ask them to:**

- a. Highlight what is new to their grade level: what is not currently included in their grade level curriculum.
  - b. Underline anything that is confusing or that they are unsure how to teach.
  - c. Star (\*) anything that they would identify as a significant increase in rigor.
3. Next, teachers look back at their current curriculum.

**Ask them to:**

- a. Highlight what they have been teaching that is not in the KCAS for their grade level.
4. Teachers from the same grade level share and discuss their findings.

**Ask them to:**

- a. Come to agreement on what they previously taught that is not addressed in the KCAS for their grade.
  - b. Chart. Be sure to label the chart with the grade level.
  - c. Have participants post charts in grade level order.
5. Teachers from across grade levels use a carousel strategy to review posters.

**Ask them to:**

- a. Review all grade level posters. Look for any content that now shows up in the KCAS at their grade level. Ask them to take their placemat for reference.
  - b. Use sticky notes or different color markers to identify the grade level and the standard(s) where it is included in the KCAS and to share other comments regarding what they notice or what they would like to learn more about. You may wish to use KCAS codes (e.g., R.L.2.5 meaning Reading Literature, grade 2, standard 5) for quick reference.
6. Teachers return to grade level teams with the chart from their grade level.  
Ask them to discuss the chart, beginning with the question below:

- a. Has what you highlighted in your curriculum (and charted) been identified in a previous grade in the KCAS?
  - **If yes, this identifies a gap which needs to be filled.**
    - Decide the grade, or grades, where the gap must be addressed. Note that if there is more than one grade between the content covered, each of those grades can share filling the gap. For instance, if content was previously covered in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but now is part of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade KCAS, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers should work together to plan how to best address the gap for those students.
  - **If no, careful discussions and decisions will need to occur** about how to address this in your district. Does what you identified support standards in other ways? This is an important discussion, but is not part of this process. See next steps below. The crosswalk tool can be used to double check.
- b. Begin completing the *Identified Gap* sheet.
  - Fill in gaps identified in step 6a.
  - List the grade(s) identified in step 6a.
  - Identify teachers who may be resources because they have taught the content.
- c. Teachers use the crosswalk to check for gaps they may have missed and to look for other connections between the KCAS and the Program of Studies.

**Next steps:**

- Ask grade level teams to chart and post what they marked as **new** in the KCAS at their grade level. Next, during another carousel activity, identify if the new content is also included at previous grade levels. Finally, they should answer the question, *Will students miss instruction on the new content at any previous grade level?* If yes, this is a gap. Add to the *Identified Gap* sheet.
- Continue the *Identified Gap* sheet by brainstorming ideas for filling gaps. Identify the teams who will need to address the gaps and provide time for them to collaborate with each other and leadership. Filling gaps should not be the sole responsibility of any one teacher. Teachers should collaborate to identify effective ways to scaffold instruction to best help students meet standards at their current grade level.
- Collaborate to develop a plan for addressing the gaps. Identify the timeline for when the gap should be filled on the *Identified Gap* sheet. This may be a multi-year plan and schools may have to set priorities if they discover several gaps. Note that

creative solutions may be necessary to address gaps. (The crosswalk may be helpful to identify areas for emphasis by looking at strong and weak matches identified in the crosswalk.) Include in the plan how progress will be monitored.

- Facilitate discussions about what teachers identified as more rigorous. How can teachers increase rigor in instruction to meet the standard? Is professional development on rigor needed?
- Facilitate a similar activity to have teachers share what they marked in the KCAS as confusing or what they have not taught before. Use the carousel approach for teachers to review charts and make note of their expertise and willingness to share ideas. Add teacher resources to the *Identified Gap* sheet. Make time for teachers to share, discuss and collaborate to deepen understanding of the KCAS. Use the *Vocabulary List and Professional Development Topics* sheet to identify needs. Coaches and administrators may use this information to provide small group mini-sessions on specific content.
- Facilitate discussions and decisions about any curriculum that is currently taught, but is no longer included in the Kentucky Core Academic Standards for English Language Arts. Does the curriculum support the standards in other ways? Careful consideration should occur before simply deleting parts of past curriculum. Remember, the Crosswalk tool should be used to double check.

*Identified Gaps*

<b>Content gap to be filled</b> <i>(identified in step 6a)</i>	<b>Grade(s)</b> <b>where gap</b> <b>is to be</b> <b>filled</b>	<b>Teams</b> <b>responsible</b>	<b>Plan for transition</b>	<b>Teacher</b> <b>resources</b>	<b>Date</b> <b>when gap</b> <b>should be</b> <b>filled</b>

*Vocabulary List & Professional Development Topics*

<b>Vocabulary List</b>	<b>Professional Development Needs</b>
<b>We need a common understanding of the following terms</b>	<b>We need to learn more about the following standards/topics/concepts</b>

*Record of completing the Identified Gaps sheet*

Date	Work Completed	Completed By



DRAFT